CONFIDENTIAL

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

(115)

Memorandum of Conversation

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DATE: July 9, 1980

(6)(1) E.O.

SUBJECT: Jamaican Elections

PARTICIPANTS: [redacted]
Donald E. Wells, Political Officer

PLACE: [redacted]

COPIES TO: ARA/CAR
CT

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY CB DATE 25 JUN 1982
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

Democracy In Jamaica

[redacted] accustomed to visits by Embassy officers, was very open about the process of setting up the election. While expressing some concern about one or two constituencies, [redacted] the enumeration process is proceeding smoothly. [redacted] not only were the committees worst fears not materializing, but it appeared that they would get a fair enumeration by almost anyone's standards. He was obviously concerned about the partisan pressure which is being brought against the independent members of the committee but indicated that these members were standing up to the pressure. [redacted] launched into a defense of the on-going electoral process in Jamaica. He opined that it would be difficult to find many, if any, other countries in the developing world with a record of democratic action as good as found here. He felt that two very positive signs of the health of Jamaica's democratic institutions are the very existence of his committee as no previous government, despite complaints, had ever relinguished control of the elections, and the early election date as the present government could have tried to hold onto power until March 1982. [redacted] outsiders must be careful not to compare the example of democracy which had functioned for years with the relatively young one found in Jamaica.

POL: DEWells:sel
(Drafting Office and Officer)

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Destabilization Charges

Finally, turning to recent allegations of a campaign by the CIA to destabilize Jamaica's government, [redacted] the Embassy should not be overly concerned with combatting the misinformation publicly. He said that America's friends in Jamaica far outnumbered its enemies and these friends would do a more credible job of defending our actions than the Embassy could. If the Embassy jumped into the political fray it would only harm the U.S.'s claim to be staying clear of internal Jamaican politics without significantly helping to change any opinions. In a related matter, he commented that the recent programs on the CIA on Jamaican television were in the spirit of a free press and that the U.S. Senate had revealed as much as these programs with its hearings on the CIA.

Observations: [redacted] taking a physical toll [redacted] When I arrived at his office he was stooped at the shoulders and complaining of pain in his upper back. He admitted that the tension and work were getting to him. In fact, he looks ten years older than when he took the job. We can only hope that his health holds up through the completion of his committee work.

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